

Lt. Governor John Garamendi Says CSU and UC Eligible High School Seniors Are Being Starved By State Budget Cutbacks

CSU & UC Boards This Week Must focus on Why Education funding is Critical for Future Workforce and Economy

SACRAMENTO - Lieutenant Governor John Garamendi, who serves as a University of California regent and a California State University trustee, said today's announcement that the CSU system will eliminate 10,000 admission spots for the 2009-10 school year will in the long-term damage California's economy and ability to compete.

"The bottom line is there will be 10,000 qualified California graduating students from the largest high school senior class ever in California's history who will not get into the CSU system because of budget cuts and the probability that next year's budget will be even worse," Lieutenant John Garamendi said. "The other bottom line is the Community Colleges are similarly impacted and they don't have space either."

Garamendi said education is the fuel that moves our economy and allows us to compete worldwide.

"We need to stand up and say enough. Education already took a substantial hit earlier this year. California and its future economy literally cannot afford more cuts. In the short-term, cuts will cause massive lay-offs and slam the door on Californians wanting to train for the future workforce. Long-term the cuts will knock California down to a second rate education system and will put this state at risk of falling further behind. California will not have the innovation, curriculum and training programs needed to produce the nurses, engineers and green economy workers of the future. California's universities and colleges are the keys to maintaining and stimulating our economy," Garamendi said.

Investing in higher education is not an abstract concept, Garamendi said, because it has real and immediate consequences that can shore up California's troubled economy. The Lieutenant Governor said the recent high unemployment numbers are causing California's budget and economy to worsen by the day. The solution, he said, is to get unemployed Californians back to work through higher education. There is a growing green technology industry but few Californians are trained to fill the jobs. Garamendi said California's colleges, labor and business are willing to work together to develop curriculum, internships and job placement programs for our future workforce. This will not only put Californians back to work but put tax dollars back into the economy.

"In the fall of 2009, the largest freshman class in California's history is expected to enter our colleges and universities. Right now students are turning in their applications with high hopes," Garamendi said. "But the admissions door is already closing. The proposed cuts and tuition hikes (taxes on students) will make it even harder for them to go to college. If we are to meet their high hopes of a college education, we need to invest in them now."

The California State Trustees will meet November 18-19 at California State University Chancellor's Office in Long Beach. The University of California regents will meet November 18-20 at the University of California San Francisco Mission Bay Community Center.

- Link to today's CSU teleconference: <http://www.calstate.edu/executive/multimedia/2008/campusimpaction08.shtml>
- Link to new PPIC poll on higher education showing affordability is the number one concern : <http://www.ppic.org/main/publication.asp?i=848>